

WDH Healthcare Facilities Project

Questions and Answers

November 15, 2016

General

How did this project come about?

In 2012 the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) commissioned a master facilities plan for the five state healthcare facilities. In 2013 a comprehensive report was issued. In 2014 the governor and the legislature appointed a task force to review the master facilities plan and make any recommendations needed to address short- and long-term goals and operating practices of each facility. The task force examined statutory obligations, conducted site evaluations and held public meetings at each facility. It then made recommendations, which included a new vision for both the Wyoming State Hospital (WSH) and the Wyoming Life Resource Center (WLRC). The legislature and governor adopted the task force's findings, which are now being implemented by WDH.

What is the new vision for WSH and WLRC?

With this new approach, WSH will provide acute, short-term psychiatric services for Wyoming residents. Patients generally will be stabilized, treated and returned to their homes for ongoing community-based services.

WLRC is envisioned to continue serving current WLRC clients; offer care for Wyoming residents with intermediate care needs; and, when required to do so, provide long-term care for residents who are very hard-to place, have high medical needs, or demonstrate exceptionally difficult behaviors and require geriatric-psychiatric care.

The new vision recognizes the needs of Wyoming residents served by both facilities has changed over time and may continue to evolve. However, the physical condition of buildings and grounds at both facilities makes it difficult for WDH to efficiently provide the modernized treatment and care called for by current law and the new vision.

What are the issues with the facilities at WSH and WLRC?

WDH and the task force reviewed functionality of the existing physical structures at both facilities and, what if any, work was needed to modernize and adapt the facilities to current and future needs. Several significant issues were identified and prioritized in the report. Deficiencies with the physical facilities at both WSH and WLRC were identified as priority issues in need of immediate attention.

Level I/II studies for both sites were commissioned by the legislature in 2014. The studies further defined needs and issues with the two facilities and made additional

recommendations, including pursuing new design and construction plans for the two facilities. Funds were set aside for the proposed projects. In 2016 the current Level III design work was approved by the legislature and additional funds were earmarked for the work.

What are the projects' guiding principles?

To help realize the new vision for these facilities, the project is focused on sticking to the approved budget, providing a healing environment and promoting operational efficiency.

What is the timeline for this project?

Currently we are in the level III design phase. Design is scheduled to be substantially completed by February 2017, in time for the 2017 legislative session. If the legislature approves the project designs, construction is expected to begin in spring 2018 with completion in 2020.

Budget

What is the budget for this project?

The legislature established an initial budget of approximately \$145.7 million for design and construction at both locations. Current estimates have the funds split evenly between the two locations. Architects are using this preliminary number for the current level III design effort. The final budget must be approved by the legislature, based on final design drawings and fund availability.

Where is the funding coming from in these tight budget times?

The legislature has been saving one-time surplus revenues to fund this project. Since 2014 more than \$105 million has been saved and earmarked for the project. Further action and funding must be approved by the legislature before construction begins.

What are the priorities for this project and available funding?

The project elements need to be completed together to realize full benefits of the new vision. However, construction at WSH is the higher priority if funding is limited.

Will there be any long-term benefits to the WDH budget from this project?

The project's primary focus is improving services for clients with the greatest needs while meeting our fundamental duties as a state agency. While there will likely be reduced maintenance costs and other efficiencies because of design improvements and grounds changes, we can't yet say how much. If clients need shorter stays at both

facilities due to the updated vision, we may see additional savings and flexibility such as bed availability.

Staffing and Costs

Will these facilities compete with the private sector?

These facilities are meant as a safety net for our hardest-to-care-for residents, which includes people who local public and private sector providers are not able to treat. The aim is to support local providers who may need help to stabilize a client before the client returns to the community.

Could we privatize these facilities?

Privatization was explored by the task force and by prior governmental and independent reviews before the current plan was recommended. Economic, statutory and liability issues make privatization challenging for both WSH and WLRC. However, the task force has suggested further exploration of options for the Wyoming Retirement Center, which is located in Basin.

What would be the impact of stopping the planned project?

The state is required to provide essential services offered by the two facilities. The task force was directed to review and update their missions, and to evaluate buildings and grounds to see what is needed to meet their ongoing obligations. If sufficient funding is not available, the project will be put on hold pending further legislative action. Moving ahead with the new vision for both facilities would also be delayed.

What will be the impact on staff from this project?

WLRC and WSH staff will be able to enjoy an updated environment to support their service to clients. The new vision will likely lead to some shifts in duties and retraining, but no significant reduction in staff levels is expected.

Will the project increase ongoing funding for maintenance and staffing?

No.

Wyoming Life Resource Center

Why do we need new buildings at WLRC?

Unfortunately, WLRC buildings are deteriorating and need constant maintenance and repair. There are too many structures, spread across a sprawling campus. Many

buildings are partially vacant with limited benefit or use, including large structures mostly used for storage.

New buildings will be designed for active treatment, to meet licensing requirements for both current and future clients and better fulfill the new WLRC mission. A better living environment will result for clients, as well as an improved and more efficient working environment for staff.

Why are new types of clients coming to WLRC?

Most Wyoming residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are currently served in their communities, which is a change from the past. The need for lifetime care services at a facility such as WLRC is decreasing.

At the same time, we are seeing more hard-to-place clients with extreme behaviors due to dementia, acquired brain injury or dual diagnosis of mental health challenges and intellectual disabilities. Wyoming's government leaders recognize the need to serve these very vulnerable and difficult clients and evaluated several options. The WLRC campus is an ideal setting for clients who need temporary intermediate and skilled services to stabilize behaviors so they can return to live successfully in the community.

Will care of existing WLRC clients be harmed by changes to the facility and its mission?

Protecting and serving the existing population remains a priority. The new facilities will improve the lifestyle of current residents, providing a more home like setting. As always, clients and their families or guardians may also explore community options supported by WDH.

How will care of existing WLRC clients be helped by changes?

Current clients will benefit from modern buildings specifically designed to support their needs. For example, many clients cannot move around on their own and require large pieces of equipment for social and therapy-related activities. The proposed design will accommodate equipment and allow space for therapy services.

If we build new structures at WLRC, what will happen to existing buildings?

Current design proposals call for removal of several structures where new buildings will be constructed. Other buildings will be adapted either for WLRC use or by another state agency. Some structures may be preserved and winterized to save operational costs. Decisions will be finalized over the next several months.

Will there be a pool at WLRC?

A smaller pool designed specifically for therapy-related purposes is planned.

Wyoming State Hospital

Why specifically do we need new buildings at WSH?

Our main goal is a healing environment where safety and security needs of patients and staff are prioritized. The current facility serves clients in multiple buildings scattered throughout a large campus area, which is not efficient. There are also significant structural concerns with many WSH buildings.

How will care of existing WSH clients be helped or changed by the project?

Much of the WSH bed capacity is currently used by people with intermediate and long-term healthcare needs such as skilled nursing, which limits beds available to clients needing short-term treatment and evaluation. Intermediate and long-term care clients will be better served at WLRC, which will focus on developing client skills to allow a return to home communities.

If we build new buildings at WSH, what will happen to the existing buildings?

The proposed design includes remodeling and adding on to the newest WSH building, which was built less than 15 years ago. The remaining campus structures are being reviewed. Options include repurposing, demolition or preservation.